

Signs that Help for Hoarding is Needed

- There's no room to sleep in bed
- Interference with cooking, bathing, and socializing
- Homecare services will not provide services
- Appliances not working
- No water
- No working toilet
- Furnace not working
- Fire code violations
- Someone is threatened with eviction
- Safety and health risks are evident
- Strong odors
- Restricted or blocked exits, heating ducts or electrical outlets
- Clutter spilling out around the house, yard, garage
- Spoiled food
- Animal waste/bugs/rodents are present



Pamela M. Krawczyk,
Commissioner

Erie County Department of Senior Services

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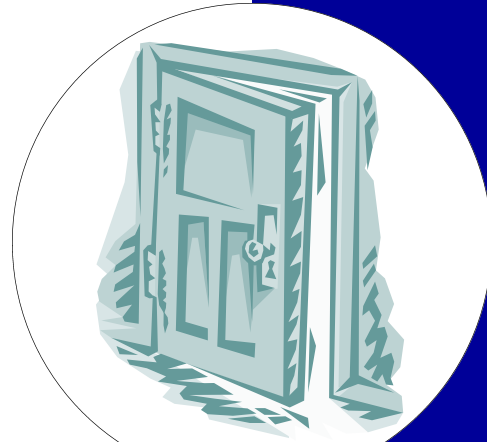
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Revised 12/29/04



**When does it become
"too much" stuff?**

*Has keeping
things become
a problem?*

*What would
you like to do
in your home
that you
cannot do
right now?*

Erie County Department
of Senior Services

(716) 858 8526

Causes of Hoarding
Collecting useless objects that
interfere with living space and
safety

"Things make me feel comfortable & safe."

"I'm overwhelmed."

"I have physical limits."

"I have money problems."

"It was on sale so I bought 20."

"I might need it later, and
won't be able to afford it."

"I suffer from mental illness."

(depression, obsessive-
compulsive disorders)

Some have problems with thinking
(cognitive problems),

Some don't know where to turn for
help.

Reach Out

For information.

For understanding.

Medications and other treatments.

Hope & Help to Reorganize

Yellow Pages listings for "organizers" to
help with sorting and "letting go"

Cleaning Agencies

Clutterers Anonymous
(<http://www.clutterersanonymous.net/index.html>)

Local Agencies

Erie County
Department of Senior Services
Information & Assistance
(716) 858-8526

Erie County
Department of Health
Environmental Field Offices
Buffalo 961-6800
Hamburg 649-4225
Lancaster 683-6487
Tonawanda 874-1070

SPCA of Erie County
Emergency Hotline
559-1780

Building Inspectors
Contact municipal offices

Erie County
Adult Protective Services (when a person
who hoards is at risk of harm) (716) 858-
6877

Our gratitude to the leaders who have established
Hoarding Task Forces in their communities (Dane
County, WI and New York City, NY and Fairfax, VA)
and those who are involved in research to provide
assistance that is effective and respectful.

Why worry?

Saving things

- Can mean problems if they interfere with living space and safety
- In full houses can cause falls and injury
- Can lead to the loss of friends/entertainment opportunities, loneliness, unhappiness and feeling overwhelmed and ashamed

What can I do with my stuff?

- ✓ Use it up
- ✓ Give it away to family & friends
- ✓ Sell it
- ✓ Donate it to charity
- ✓ Discard it

Hoarding*

- Saving or collecting continues beyond what is needed or usable—even when the house and additional storage space are full
- Value, uniqueness and sentiment is found in “stuff” that others do not find valuable, such as old papers, containers, and food items
- Strong emotional attachments are formed with many items for comfort or safety
- Efforts to stop collecting or to discard things are unsuccessful, leading to a sense of anxiety, emptiness, vulnerability, and more collecting

- The fear of losing things prevents discarding them or gives rise to putting them away, out of sight
- “Stuff” interferes with safe and functional use of the home for sleeping, cooking, bathing and socializing
- Savers may see the “stuff” as acceptable or may be too overwhelmed to respond
- Others see the “stuff” as both-ersome and dangerous

* From the Dane County Hoarding Task Force, Madison, WI

More helpful information:

http://www.cornellaging.org/gem/hoarding_index.html

<http://www.disposophobia.com/>

<http://www.newsroom.ucla.edu/page.asp?RelNum=5218>

Take Action

Seek help

Make a plan for a functional and safe home

Take small steps and be patient

When sorting through “stuff”, ask

- Have I used this in the past year?
- What is broken or useless?
- What am I keeping for others?
- What do I really treasure?
- What is the cost of keeping things? (insurance, fees, storage space, relationships, emotional pain)

Avoid getting more possessions

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